



MONTH OF DECEMBER

GRIT

from

VARA Youth Coordinator, Alex Krebs



PROTECTIVE SPORTS GEAR

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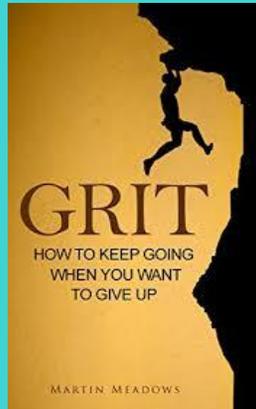
Thanks to BLIZ, this months' Theme
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Welcome winter!

We have been experiencing typical New England weather, one day is fall and the next we have a foot of snow and, the timing was perfect, just before and after the Killington Cup! The women racing in the SL and GS at the World Cup experienced some very challenging weather and conditions! They are a true example of what Alex explains below about GRIT!

Julie Woodworth - VARA Executive Director

GRIT



What are the characteristics that separate an athlete from being a good player from a great player? At the Elite level of athletics, there is a very small level of physical difference between the top athletes. The answer is simple: The best athletes possess a characteristic called "GRIT." Talent can be taught but not without GRIT as the foundation.

So, what is GRIT? Dr. Angela Duckworth, the pioneer in GRIT research, defines this trait as, "self-discipline, combined with a passionate commitment to a task and a burning desire to see it through.... Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals. One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn't. Grit isn't talent. Grit isn't luck. Grit isn't how intensely, for the moment, you want something- a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal".

There is a simple acronym to help remember what GRIT is:

- **Goals:** Having a long-term goal, like making Varsity in high school or playing in college, but also having short-term goals that you work at every day.
Example: After ski practice taking a few extra runs of fundamental skills.
1. **Define your goals. If they are not defined how do you know when you have reached them or when you are falling short?**
 2. **Determine Why. The WHY has to be defined otherwise grit will more likely be unnecessary.**
 3. **Share your goals. Sharing your goals helps you achieve them. Writing down and sharing goals with friends boosts your chances of reaching your goals. A Forbes study showed those who did not share their goals met their goal less than 50% of the time. Those who did share achieved their goals almost 75% of the time."**

- **Resiliency:** Flex your mind in face of adversity, to be able to bounce back. Sports is a game of highs and lows, but being resilient means taking it all in stride. *Example: Perhaps you struggle with the one-ski drill. Instead of avoiding it you practice it with 100% effort because you know it will improve your skiing.*
- **Integrity:** This means taking pride in yourself, your performance, your practice, and your team. It means deliberately practicing, not just walking through the motions. This requires self-control. *Example: Running through a drill you don't like very much with 100% effort, because you know it will make you the best player you can be in the end*
- **Tenacity:** This is the heart of GRIT. It's the sheer determination and perseverance to reach your goals and work towards reaching your full potential. To get to a high level you have to show intensity in your ability to reach your goals. *Example: Extra hours of practice or training, watching video, etc.*

GRIT in Action:

GRIT is not developed overnight or in one training session. Developing GRIT is a process. But small changes are what equal big rewards in GRIT. Here is a way to put this into action now.

- Push yourself 5% extra. For change to occur you have to experience some discomfort. This is when GRIT is the key factor. If you can withstand the challenge this is what separates great from good.
- Giving that extra 5% each time starts to build GRIT and dedication. Try this during your next workout or practice and see how much more you have in your tank!

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Please visit the [VARA Youth Coordinator Page](#) on the [VARA](#) site.